

Winter of '87 by klutzysunshine

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Summary: Joyce and Hopper find out about the baby in the winter of '87. The kids gets a little overprotective while El demands a sister.

Winter of '87

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In the winter of '87, after they stopped yet another Upside Down invasion, several illnesses tore through the party and temporarily took them all down. Joyce initially blamed feeling off on the flu and tried to power through it until she realized her illness was lasting longer than it should have. Her suspicions about what exactly what was wrong with her were confirmed by her doctor but the news still threw her for a loop. "You look lost in thought," Hopper observed of his girlfriend when he got home from work.

She laughed nervously, wondering what their children were up to and hoping they'd be busy for a while so she could break the news. "You know how I've been sick?"

Hopper stood up straight, suddenly worried. "Yeah. What about it?"

"I went to the doctor's today." Joyce bit her lip. "I'm pregnant, Hop."

Dead silence for a minute or so as he struggled to process that bombshell before a grin lit up his face. "Are you serious?"

She nodded nervously. "Are you happy?" Both excited and terrified about the baby, Joyce couldn't stop the slither of fear that ran through her at the thought of him being unhappy about the pregnancy.

Hopper pulled her closer to him and lifted Joyce up, eliciting a squeal from her. "I'm happy, Joyce. A little mini version that's half of both of us? How could I not be happy about that?"

"We're old," she pointed out after he set her down, fidgeting a little.

He laughed. "Yeah, we are, but I think the numerous apocalypses have kept us young at heart." Then he winked at her.

Joyce rolled her eyes but beamed at him anyway. "We're having a

baby, Hop!"

"We're having a baby!" He kissed her and then his hand wandered down to her stomach. "I love you, Joyce."

"I love you too, softie."

"When should we tell the kids?" he asked a few minutes later as they sat down to eat dinner.

"Probably soon." Most worried about El's reaction, Joyce could only hope their daughter would take the news well. The teenager had been pretty happy upon discovering the news that she and Hopper were in a relationship, but this was a completely different ballgame.

"We could call Jonathan after we eat - he'll be the first to know," Hopper suggested. He felt a pang in his heart as he thought about Sara and how excited she'd likely be about the news. He hoped she would have liked El, Will, and Jonathan.

"Good idea!" Joyce dug into her food, hoping she wouldn't regret it, and the two sat in silence until after they finished the dishes.

"Holy shit!" was Jonathan's response when they broke the news to him.

Joyce giggled. "Exactly my response when I found out. You okay with this?" she pressed in concern.

Jonathan resisted the urge to sigh. "Mom, I'm an adult. Yeah, it's weird that there'll be a twenty year age difference but I'll get over it. And Will's going to be happy too if that's what you're worried about. He adjusted pretty quickly to the "El is likely going to be your stepsister and Hopper your stepfather" situation pretty well, didn't he?"

"Yeah," she conceded, wrapping the cord around her fingers. "Thanks, sweetheart. Give Nancy and Steve my love, and tell them, okay?"

"I will. Congratulations, Mom. I'm really happy for you." He just wished he could stop freaking out about gaining another sibling. And also trying not to think about the proof he now had that his mother

and Hopper were having sex.

The two of them hung up, and within minutes, El and Will came home after eating out with the party. "What's going on?" asked a concerned and suddenly suspicious Will when he noticed how nervous they were.

El narrowed her eyes at them. "You're hiding something. You're not supposed to do that," she reminded her parents.

Hopper scoffed. "Sit down. We have something to tell you two."

Will paled. "Is it the Upside Down?" he asked, voice strained.

"No! No! Nothing to do with the Upside Down for once," Joyce quickly assured her youngest, pulling him in for a quick hug.

"Hurry up," an impatient and worried El pleaded.

Hopper and Joyce exchanged a happy glance. "I'm pregnant!"

Will floundered for a second or two before recovering and jumping up to hug them. "That's fantastic news!"

The contemplative look on El's face worried Joyce and Hopper as they waited for her to react. "I want a sister," she demanded.

Joyce snorted. "I hope you get one but we know for sure until they're born. It's kinda already decided so don't be too upset if it's a boy, okay?" She ruffled her daughter's hair, ignoring El's squeak of protest.

"It's not going to be a boy. Sister," El emphasized.

Joyce hoped she got her wish but she had a feeling she was having another boy.

Once the party found out about Joyce's pregnancy, they swarmed the Byers-Hopper household and immediately became overprotective of her. "We're going to make sure nothing happens to you and the baby," Mike promised as Dustin, Lucas, and Max bobbed their heads in agreement.

"We'll make sure the Upside Down doesn't come back to fuck with us again," chimed in Lucas as his eyes darted around the kitchen to make sure nothing came out of the shadows.

"This baby is one of us and we're going to protect them." That came from Max.

"Oh, and congratulations, by the way." Dustin seemed to be the only one who had remembered to congratulate them and Joyce loved him for it.

"Thanks, babies." She kissed the tops of their heads and then made her way over to Hopper. "This is going to be a long six months, isn't it? They're sweet, obviously, but this is going to get annoying pretty quickly," she whispered.

Hopper smiled at Joyce. "Eh, after what they've been through the past few years, let them. I'm not surprised they're acting this way." He then leaned down and kissed her.

"Hey!" squawked Dustin.

"This is gross and why Joyce is in this position to begin with!" Lucas teased.

Joyce pulled away from him, laughing. "Why did we unofficially adopt so many kids?" she fake griped.

Hopper shrugged. "Beats me."

"I can't wait until my sister's here." El's dazzling smile lit up the kitchen, and Joyce and Hopper both hoped she didn't get her heart broken.

"You're not letting this go, are you?" questioned an amused Will.

She shook her head. "I'm not." She had dug her heels in about this and wouldn't budge. It was endearing in a way.

"Are you going to change the baby's diaper?" Mike asked his girlfriend as he wrapped his arm around her.

She wrinkled her nose up. "Did you ever have to change Holly?"

"A few times," he admitted. He hadn't liked it but he wasn't about to tell El that. She was going to learn about this younger sibling thing herself, even though he wanted to tell her.

And so the party settled into their new normal for the next few months and beyond.

By the time she reached her sixth month of pregnancy, an exhausted Joyce couldn't wait to meet the baby (and was also thankful the Upside Down was quiet for now). "Please massage my feet again," she begged her boyfriend.

"You're never going to get tired of this, are you?" He didn't mind, though, since he was the one who did this to her.

"Nope." She laughed and plopped her feet down in his lap. Joyce was thankful the kids were leaving for them alone for once because there was only so much overprotectiveness she could take at once. She did appreciate it and love them for their effort, though - they loved her and were worried about the two of them. How could she be mad about that? They had even learned to avoid the mood swings and satisfy her cravings.

"You know, I didn't expect my life to turn out like this when I moved back to Hawkins? We've defeated several monsters from another dimension, I adopted a pre-teen, and finally got to admit that I'm in love with you."

Joyce sniffled. "And I'm sure you were surprised to find out that your unrequited love wasn't quite so unrequited." Discovering that Hopper had been in love with her since high school and hadn't done anything about it had been a shock to the system to her since she had been harboring feelings for him for years too. Numerous encounters with the Upside Down had brought them closer - the dam had broken after a night of "Thank God you're alive" sex.

He continued to rub her feet and nodded. "I was." He never expected her to feel the same way about him so he had tried his best to ignore

his feelings until one day he couldn't. Thankfully, it had worked out for them.

Joyce gave in to a little bit of anxiety about her pregnancy. "Hop, what if we fuck this up?" she asked fearfully.

"I worry about that every day, but Joyce, we've been through this before. We know what we're doing. And the kids will keep us in line," he joked.

It had the intended effect - she leaned forward as she far as she could and playfully swatted him. "Jim Hopper!" Joyce scolded.

"Joyce Byers!" he mocked.

"You better be thankful I hurt too much to kick your ass."

"I look forward to your ass kicking after the baby's born."

"Good." She sighed in relief as he kept up the massage, and ended up falling asleep.

"Relax!" all the kids shouted as Joyce after she got up (which took a few attempts) to take care of dinner a few months later. With two weeks to go, a stir-crazy Joyce just wanted something to do something.

"You can just sit right there and stay calm," Nancy ordered.

"I am calm. You're all driving me up the fucking wall," an annoyed Joyce snapped.

"We're just going to order pizza, Mama," El assured her.

"You don't even need to worry about the money because we're taking care of this." Mike eyed her in concern, worried she'd go into labor any minute now.

"Can you all stop hovering? I still have a few weeks to go and I can't take this anymore." Joyce loved them all but she was ready to unload on all of them if they continued to pull this shit.

"Sorry." Nancy tried her best to look contrite but nobody bought it.

"We can go upstairs and leave you alone," Will suggested, although that was the last thing he wanted to do. Leaving her alone set him on edge (and against the rules, per Hopper).

"I'm just pregnant. And word of advice? Please don't treat your future partners this like when they're having a baby." Joyce went to leave (she wanted a dramatic exit) but stopped walking when she felt a familiar trickle. She looked up at them in horror. "My water just broke."

"That means the baby's coming. Hospital," El helpfully informed the rest of the party. "I'll get to meet my sister!"

Even in the midst of a contraction, Joyce wanted to tell her not to get her hopes up but decided she had more important things to worry about. "Fuck!" she whimpered.

"We'll call your doctor and get you to the hospital. Somebody get a car!" Nancy barked.

"I'll go!" Steve called and he bolted through the house.

"I'll call Hopper," promised Will once he realized his brother was too panicked to do so. As soon as he calmed down, he'd make fun of Jonathan for this.

"New member of the party!" Max shouted as she raced her way upstairs to get Joyce's bag.

"We got this, Mrs. Byers," Lucas told her.

"Great. That's wonderful news." Nancy helped usher her out the door and the group soon made their way to the hospital. Hopper met them there in under ten minutes.

Five hours later, Joyce delivered a six pound, four ounce little girl. "El got her sister," an excited Hopper murmured to his girlfriend.

Joyce inhaled as sharp contractions continued to assail her. "Hurts," she murmured.

Her doctor looked up and gave them an encouraging smile. "Seems like we missed something during the ultrasound - another baby's crowning. It's twins!"

"Two of them? Are you fucking kidding me? I can't do this again."

Hopper grabbed her chin and forced her to look at him. "Joyce, it's a little too late for that. I'm sorry I knocked you up with two of them but you got this. You're so strong. You're almost done," he encouraged.

"Fine," she grumbled, grunting as another contraction built up. And three minutes later, Joyce gave birth to another healthy little girl. "I'm not doing this again," she warned.

He laughed. "I think you're safe now. I'm going to have to send the kids out to the store to pick up some more shit but that's okay." Twins certainly hadn't been on the agenda but they could deal with this.

When Joyce napped, Hopper shocked the hell out of their family upon informing them about their unexpected guest. "Two sisters?" El asked in awe.

"You got your wish, kiddo. How you feel?" Hopper asked her.

"Happy," she answered right away.

"Good."

And when Joyce was up to it, the whole group filed in to meet the newest members of the party - Rebecca Jennifer and Alice Vivian Hopper. "Bex is the oldest and pretty cranky about being out in the real world," an amused and tired Joyce told them.

"Alice doesn't give a shit," chimed in Hopper.

"They're both really tiny." Will couldn't believe he now had two younger sisters but he was determined to protect them.

"You were tiny too, just not like this," Jonathan told him.

"This is awesome," Dustin whispered.

"You two make some cute kids." Steve wasn't surprised in the least.

"I'll baby-sit if you need me to," volunteered Nancy. Just when they were a little bit older because two newborns seemed like it'd be overwhelming.

"We're going to need someone to go the store and pick up some things we don't have." Joyce wasn't surprised when a few of them volunteered to do so.

Bex started to cry, which set off Alice, but their parents managed to calm them down relatively fast. "Can I hold one of them?" questioned an impatient (but thrilled) El.

"Of course." Joyce handed over Bex, and El's breath caught in her throat.

"I'm going to protect you both." She loved the twins so much already and was so excited they were finally here.

Mike leaned over and kissed her. "I love you, El."

"Love you too, Mike." El shushed Bex when she let out a little wail and continued to hold the baby for a few more minutes. "I'm happy," she declared after reluctantly handing her sister back to Joyce.

"That's good." Hopper set Alice down and hugged his now oldest daughter. He wished Sara was here to meet her sisters but he couldn't think about the what ifs anymore. He had to think about Bex and Alice's futures and what life was going to be like for them going forward.

When Joyce and the babies came home from the hospital, they were relieved to find it clean - the party worked fast. Joyce changed Alice's diaper and laid her down in the bassinet next to Bex then sat down on the couch. Hopper sat down on the table and she blinked at him. "What are you doing, Hop?"

"What I should have done a long time ago," he answered, and she didn't even have time to wonder what he was talking about because he slipped a ring on her finger.

Joyce gasped and stared at him. "I like how you assumed I'd say yes, jackass. That is my answer but that's beside the point." She swung forward and kissed him. "Thanks for the non-proposal. I can't wait to marry you."

"Same here."

"The kids are going to be thrilled. You know we have to invite them, right?" She wanted a small wedding performed by a justice of the peace but it'd be a little big with all the kids. That was okay with her, however.

"Fine with me." He'd marry the love of his life in any capacity - it didn't matter to him how it happened as long as it did.

Since they were so busy taking care of the twins, Nancy helped by with most of the wedding plans and was even Joyce's maid-of-honor when she and Hopper married just three weeks later (neither wanted to wait). Bex and Alice helped keep things calm by sleeping through the entire ceremony, which their parents were thankful for.

None of them were aware of the danger lurking in the woods, ready to strike at any minute.